

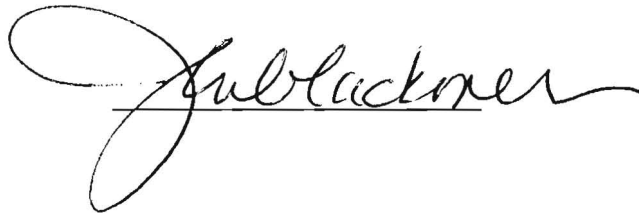
**The Power of Acting: A Moving Theatrical Production**

**An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)**

**by**

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A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Blackmer", written over a horizontal line.

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## Abstract

One would be hard pressed to pin down mankind's first theatrical performance given the frequent nature by which we are prone to entertain each other. However, as the years have passed, mankind has traditionally placed most of its theatrical pursuits on one thing: A stage. It is with my Honors Thesis that I have decided to move the performance off of the stage- examining the nature of acting and creating a mobile production where the audience literally follows the performance through campus along an unfolding path of satire, noir, and Ball State University popular culture. Blending elements of theater and film, the script I have written attempts to immerse the audience not only in the emotions and actions of the myriad variety of characters in the play, but also to blur the line between what is the story world and what is merely the campus they have known and walked day in and day out. The moving production weaves its way through campus, beginning and ending in Pruis Hall, telling a humorous, coming-of-age story of two aspiring actors trying to find their right footing in this strange place we call college.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge Jennifer Blackmer for her kind and blind support of a TCOM film major taking a crack at the wonderful and beautiful world of theater. Her advising and enthusiasm for my idea has given me keen insight into the creation of a compelling story. Everyone deserves a chance to reach for something larger than themselves, and Jennifer has given me this chance.

I would also like to thank my good friend Adam Lord for his never-failing support of the project and for putting up with my incessant demands. He is a truly handsome man and a wonderful writer. In the same boat I would like to thank Dominic Schiferl for his brilliant ideas and grand enthusiasm- you took my average idea, and said a lot of really funny, nice things about it. Thanks guys.

## Artist Statement

### The Power of Acting: A Moving Theatrical Production

#### “The World Is Your Stage. Literally”

Like most grand ideas, my idea started with something small. It was a question actually, something that I mentioned in passing, expecting a simple answer. But before we get to the question, let's set the stage- so to speak. I was meeting with two fellow collaborators for the purposes of brainstorming an idea that had sprung into my head over the summer. I was actually going to formulate this idea into my Honors Thesis, an idea that I had been quite excited about. We were two hours into the meeting, bouncing wonderful ideas off of each other. That's when a Ball State tour walked by. The lull in the conversation had brought my thespian friend to bring up a dilemma that had plagued a play that he was recently cast in- their lack of performance space. I put two and two together and asked if anyone had ever put on a walking play.

He came back to me with a blank look on his face. “A walking play?” I had to think my answer through- what exactly was I getting at? “You know, a play that moves and the audience follows.” Another blank face. Then a nod. And slowly, a smile. And thus was born my actual Honors Thesis project.

It would take a couple more weeks and countless midnight brainstorming sessions to fully define what exactly I was trying to accomplish, but the idea was bold and new, something different that both challenged and entertained. As a Telecommunications major and an aspiring film director, the idea intrigued me for several reasons.

For one, it wasn't film. I had just finished a thirty-five minute short film that had sapped up the better part of six months and exhausted me from endless hours of writing,



hauling equipment, filming, and late-nights spent in lonely edit bays. I will forever love film, but the reason I love directing is my love of stories, and the interaction between actors to bring the characters and said stories to life. Theater would be a liberating experience, something live and vibrant, more off-the-cuff than scheduled and confined to a frame. There's a place for both, but at the time the theater called my name.

Secondly- there is a unique parallel between film and the idea that I had come up with, and that is that the audience becomes the camera. With the ability to follow the action and see it from whatever angle they desire frees the audience from the traditional seats and rows in a theater and places them in the actor's world.

Speaking of the actor's world, it leads me to another interesting idea- one that I felt would create a unique experience for the actors. The world of a play is usually constrained to a stage. The stage is designed, decorated, and planned in order to place the actors in the world of the story. A few spare chairs and a vase of flowers might be all the actors have to immerse themselves in Shakespearean England. With my idea, the world of the play would be the very world that they were walking through. If there was a bench, they could sit on the bench, and the next scene arrived when they arrived at the next scene. The other characters in the play would literally walk around a corner and approach the protagonists instead of appearing out of the wings off-stage. It's not to say that this would make the actor's role any easier, but rather to say it would allow for a new dimension to exist between the audience and the actors. They are both seeing and experiencing the exact same physical things. When they point off in the distance to the Bell Tower, they are literally pointing to a Bell Tower, not an imaginary spot behind the audience's head.

So with all these motivations in mind, what would it be about? What I had was a hook, a formalistic style to govern the rules of the world- but what would drive it? After much debate, I veered the discussion into a few select criteria- it would be a satire, with a touch of noir, all existing (in the story) on the actual Ball State University campus. From here we made of list of BSU pop culture that we could tastefully lampoon, writing down everything from David Letterman to the Free Hugs group that often populates the Scramble Light.

I then began contemplating the best thematic way to tie the formalistic idea of the moving play to that of our story. Why did we choose to tell this particular story in this particular way? I realized that the idea of bringing actors out of the stage and into the real world was something rather interesting. Actors are normally (on a rudimentary level) judged by how well they stay in character, hopefully achieving a level of verisimilitude. But what happens when their character stops “acting”, walks off the stage, and out of the front doors, with you in tow? And the show goes on? This puts a transparency up against the acting process, layering their performance, showing the audience the on and off stage versions of a character. It also allows us to see what hints of the actual person come out of their character on stage.

I began to examine acting, what it is, how we do it everyday, and what those within the profession make of it. Coupling this with our formalistic element of the moving play, we began writing around a theme of exploration and examination. That a fulfilled life and a fulfilled performance isn't something that can be made up in your mind, or out of a book, or even just during a rehearsal. Acting, like real life (and almost

any other pursuit), is benefited by walking out into the world, learning and adapting to both the nobler and harder truths.

Now, all of this sounds rather dire, but it was from this avenue that we began cobbling together our story. We satirized actors, creating The Drama Club, a student organization not unlike a powerful crime family that rose to power through its talents and hard work. Acting became a weapon, something that could be used to overpower someone, allowing the actor to literally become them and replace them in their lives, without anyone ever knowing. By “being in character” the Drama Club could plant its members throughout the university, manifesting power and influence, all while fellow clubs began bowing to their abilities, for fear of being taken over. Acting became a device used out of dominance and fear, a closed-minded pursuit misconstrued and under-utilized.

Sprinkle on top of this our two protagonists, wide-eyed Freshman eager to learn but innocent enough for manipulation, and I was well on my way to something intriguing. But it’s never that easy, is it?

We also had to plan out pacing and blocking- two of our biggest enemies. In a play on stage you have the advantage of having a stationary audience, allowing for most of the actors exposure to be directly facing them. Our problem was that our audience would be following our actors, so in order to hear and see them, we had to think of ways to block actors so that they were constantly turning to face the audience or getting them to different markers so they could pause and deliver the necessary lines to advance the plot.

It all began with a map of Ball State University. Knowing that the story was going to start on a stage, we chose Pruis as the location for our first and final scene. From there we had to string our characters and events together, adding enough action and plot development to coherently gel with the trajectory of the play. Essentially, we deduced a loop; starting at Pruis, going through Bracken Library, up to the Bell Tower, through Letterman, Ball Communications, and the Atrium, down to the Scramble Light and back up to Pruis along McKinley. It was a marriage of the perfect distance (we didn't want to keep people walking all night) and the perfect number of location-centric plot points for the characters to interact and unravel the narrative.

Big ideas usually breed big ideas- and I had my fair share of them. I wanted a song and dance number, our audience following a character who begins humming to himself, then singing, and finally having back-up dancers and a live band pull up to finish the number off. I wanted a massive full-scale battle scene with the Ball State Dagorhir club, putting our audience in the middle of the foam-covered frenzy (luckily, this still made it into the script). My most ambitious idea (and one which I definitely think should be explored further) is that of Ultimate Audience Freedom- allowing characters in the play to fracture off from each other, presenting audience members with a choice. Any choice, and any character, would lead the audience member(s) to a different branch of the play, eventually intertwining back together at different moments. This is the highest level of immersion, something closer to being someone's personal ghost, even if the plot has already been written.

The sad part is that much of this was initially cut. It was cut because given the time I had, and with the initial motivation to write and produce the play in the same

semester- it just wasn't feasible. And while many artists will say it is better to dream big and fail than to always play it safe- I found that I would not have been creatively satisfied if I tried to rush the play into production.

And then things changed a bit.

It was with a heavy heart that I sat at my desk, pushing full throttle into production on the play. While still juggling casting, trying to line up actors for the roles and working on a rough schedule for rehearsals, the gravity of the situation slowly crept up the back of my neck. I suddenly realized that even when giving one hundred and ten percent, producing a play was a collaborative effort and an incredible undertaking- and would involve the time of a handful of other individuals. Even with the guidance of my Department Advisor and collaborators- the scope of actually producing the play quickly faded to that of an improbability, especially in terms of having it performed at a satisfactory level.

The process had eluded me. Motivation and ambition had blinded me. I had all the necessary tools and my creativity and imagination were keeping traction on the script and development, but I had never truly been prepared for such a staggering feat. This was the first play I had ever written, and would be the first play that I would produce, let alone produce it independently of the Theater Department. I knew what my story was, but by pigeonholing it into something that needed to be feasible, I inevitably had to keep paring it down. Great ideas were tossed by the wayside and even doable things were made even simpler, just so I could get the play out the door.

After meeting with my Departmental Advisor, we agreed that I had taken a soaring idea and clipped its wings. Now, in order to set it soaring again, I would have to re-write. But this time, I would re-write without any inhibitions, simply because the story only needed to exist on paper.

I remember sitting in the meeting with Jen, literally feeling a great weight lift off my shoulders. I realized after reading through my final draft of the first version of the script, that while it touched upon the big ideas I had first fallen in love with, it was like drinking a watered down version of your favorite drink- no matter how many sips you take, it never tastes right. Fresh, new ideas started pouring back in. Within minutes of leaving the meeting I had already committed myself to a Page One Rewrite. Which meant I was going to use the same conceit and the same world that I had initially created, but I was going to re-work it from page one to page end.

Now, normally, a page one rewrite is almost a despicable term. It means that there is something fundamentally wrong with a script and (usually) it has been handed off to another writer who attempts to rectify the situation given the world of another author's pen. It was with this mindset that I would learn the most about myself as a writer and a storyteller.

When I was suddenly tasked with tearing up my own work in order to save it, I was able to see how I formulated ideas and how they translated to the page. I could no longer afford myself the luxury of merely tweaking something, or adding a scene here or there, or re-wording a line. I was taking apart the engine I had patented a month before and I was learning about how I was thinking then and having to force myself to think of it different and better now.

Origins of characters changed, relationships changed, emotional and comedic trajectory changed, the mapping of the story was reversed, the main theme was tweaked and twisted, and a new theme was added in as well.

I find it a fascinating exercise to read the two versions of the play back-to-back. The two main characters have the same name, but embark on completely different journeys. While the first version may exist in a much more feasible world, the second version takes the reader and audience on a much wilder ride, never letting them rest on their haunches, or best of all, contemplate what could happen next. I quickly learned that spontaneity was the key ingredient I had been sorely lacking in the first version of the play.

As Jen put it, “coming from a production background in TCOM, I feel like you are too worried about how the play will work instead of letting the story breathe and happen for itself.” And she could never have been more right. As I let the characters on the page move around and live on the page, I found my brain filling in the empty space and unmotivated walking with vibrant characters and dynamic interactions within the conceit and story world.

This would result in another lesson learned, one which I would have missed if I hadn’t chosen to step outside of my major to work on this outer-disciplinary passion project. And the lesson learned was to examine my collegiate education. Students not only get so inundated with work within their major, but oftentimes, if they have to do any work outside of their major, they disregard it, casting it aside as “something I’ll never need to know, I just need the credit to graduate.” However, I feel it is the aim of the Honors College to promote rounded education, especially influencing a lifetime of

learning, and for this reason I am glad (and my respective advisors) I pursued Theater instead of Film for my Honors Thesis. This thesis has shown me how my video and production oriented background have influenced my storytelling abilities and vice versa. But my thesis has allowed me to evaluate my skills in a new light. It has allowed me to examine the way I think and write given a medium that I had little experience in, with the added benefit of the subsequent rewrite forcing me to further examine the choices I made in a completely new environment. In a way, it was like watching and critiquing an instant replay of myself putting together a puzzle- the added opportunity may have involved doubling in the workload, but the self-aware payoff was priceless.

My intent with this script is two-fold. One, is to create an entertaining and compelling story that justifiably utilizes the “moving stage” walking conceit. Two, is something that will hopefully live on past this humble thesis, and that is to lay the groundwork for this play to potentially be produced.

It was a daunting task, initially hacking our way through the juggling jungle of taking a play and, quite literally, setting it in motion (on page) through campus- but it is definitely doable. Not only is it doable, but I think that it honestly provides the playwright and production company with a very unique opportunity to create location specific stories. As a sort of beta, we set our story at Ball State, using characters like Happy Friday Guy, David Letterman, and BSU pop culture to inhabit the story world. The specific tropes work nicely when bent to the story, creating an alternate perception of places and interactions from those which students experience every day.



Now, imagine if professional theater companies were to write such a story for Chicago or New York City? Obviously there are tons of logistical issues that would have to be worked out- but how thrilling would it be to hustle through Times Square, a voyeur to a twisting and turning story that weaves through the Big Apple? The same could be said for non-urban environments. I could imagine an atmospheric and paranoid performance that took an audience into a forest or farm. The sentence “the world is your stage” could never be more true. You just need to have an able audience, ready and willing to take the journey with you.

A chance for exploration and risk-taking is imperative to the growth of an artist, and I feel that stepping out of my comfort-zone has only helped me better hone my creativity and ambitions. This is especially true from the experience I have gained in now knowing that rare instance where I may need to throw everything I have out the window and start over. And, to have a positive attitude in regards to such a major revamping of work I have already been so technically and emotionally invested in.

The creation process of this script has been simultaneously frustrating and inspiring, two emotional states I feel any artist should experience when working on a project. It was frustrating to see the play fall just short of being produced and performed but inspiring to see the world on paper grow and to entertain the idea of the play having life after my departure from this university, or even beyond. In many ways, I feel the thesis has accomplished exactly what it needed to; it was an intensive learning process, which subsequently laid the groundwork for myself and other individuals to take the recipe and add their own flavoring to create something new and exciting, bettering itself

iteration after iteration. It also just so happens to serve as a farewell love-letter to the university I have spent the last four years of my life at, and all the steps I have taken in between.

The Power of Acting

A Moving Production

by  
Elliott San

Story by:  
Elliott San, Adam Lord, and Dominic Schiferl

4/3/11  
Revised Final Draft

## SCENE 1 - FROG BABY

ANNETTE and KYLE sit on separate benches, enjoying the cool, Fall evening. A GROUP OF FRAT BROTHERS walk by, pausing for a moment. One named KIMMO wears a scarf, tucked into his jacket.

FRAT LEADER

Dude. Alright, how are we going to do this?

KIMMO

Let's break up. Smaller groups will get us more pledges.

They congratulate Kimmo by roughhousing him. Unknowingly, his scarf falls off. They stop cheering, staring at Kimmo.

FRAT LEADER

Yo. What are you doing? You can't wear our letters!

They move in menacingly, Kimmo takes off, the frat boys hot on his heels, yelling.

ANNETTE

Excuse me!

KYLE

You dropped your scarf!

Annette stands, going to pick it up.

ANNETTE

Well. He took off in a hurry.

KYLE

Must not be too attached.

ANNETTE

I wonder if that's typical of fraternities...

KYLE

If so, remind me never to join.

A pause.

KYLE

It'd probably be best to hand it in to the Lost and Found.

ANNETTE

Oh good idea!

She walks over, handing it to Kyle, smiling. He reluctantly takes it.

KYLE

Thanks. I guess I'll run it over to the library...

ANNETTE

Well, you're just full of good ideas! Come on!

KYLE

Oh. I didn't know this was a joint venture.

Kyle gets up, following Annette towards the library.

## SCENE 2 - FROG BABY TO BRACKEN LIBRARY

Annette turns, hand outstretched.

ANNETTE

Hi! My name's Annette.

KYLE

Hi. I'm Kyle.

ANNETTE

Kyle! That's a nice name. You look young.

KYLE

Uh, well, I'm a freshman.

ANNETTE

Fresh blood! Yay! Me too.

Another beat.

ANNETTE

So, what's your major?

KYLE

Undecided as of now. My Dad thinks I should study business, but I'm not sure. So this year I'm just getting my core classes out of the way.

ANNETTE

Me too. My parents actually made me stay undecided. They want me to spend my first year finishing all my electives before I declare my major. They want me to "explore".

They pass by a GUITARIST, sitting by a tree. He sings, casually. Annette, talks over him, stopping to dig some change out and throw it on the ground next to him.

GUITARIST

Oh, be careful... Be careful... These words may seem an earful, but, oh, be careful- who you hang around.

ANNETTE

But, they're artists and writers and who knows what else, so they don't ever really know what they want. They just wanted me to go to college!

KYLE

Yeah, I actually don't really know what I want to do. But, I'm the first in my family to go to college, so I have to make sure I don't mess it up..

ANNETTE

That's good! But, I know exactly what I want to major in!

KYLE

Oh yeah, what's that?

ANNETTE

Actuarial Science!

KYLE

Really?

ANNETTE

Really really!

Two JUGGLERS juggle on the steps of Bracken. They call to Kyle and Annette as they approach.

JUGGLER 1

Really really wanna join the Ball State Juggling Club?

JUGGLER 2

There's never been a better time! Today, and today only, we'll throw in a free beginner's set of balls!

KYLE

Those are just tennis balls.

ANNETTE

Gotta start somewhere!

JUGGLER 1

That's the spirit!

He suddenly stops, taking out a piece of paper, pulling Annette in close.

JUGGLER 1

Now, if you could just sign your name, and write your email address here, you will officially be...

Kyle intervenes.

KYLE

Hey now! She didn't say she was going to join just yet.

ANNETTE

It's ok! I've always wanted to learn.

Annette takes the pen in her hand.

JUGGLER 1

Yesssss, just go ahead and write it down there...

Kyle taps her on the shoulder.

KYLE

Hey, I'm just going to return that scarf then.

ANNETTE

Oh! Completely forgot! I'll join another time, but I'll start practicing tonight!

She throws the scarf up in the air, catching it.

JUGGLER 2

Not cool man!

JUGGLER 1

Yeah, give your girlfriend a little freedom!

KYLE

She's actually not my girlfriend, but, I'll keep that in mind.

Kyle and Annette walk to the library doors.

KYLE

Not a very warm welcome....

ANNETTE

Oh, I'm sure they were just eager for new members.

KYLE

Yeah, they were practically biting your hand off to get you to sign that thing.

### SCENE 3 - BRACKEN LIBRARY

ANNETTE

Maybe they don't usually get much interest.

KYLE

True, juggling is more of an individual activity. They were probably ecstatic for your excitement- especially being a girl and all.

ANNETTE

What's that supposed to mean?

The conversation ends abruptly, hearing SHOUTS from around the Naked Lady. Two GROUPS, the STUDENT REPUBLICANS and STUDENT DEMOCRATS stand, squaring off, an invisible line keeping them apart.

STUDENT REPUBLICAN LEADER

I respect the form of a woman, but it is indecent to be naked in public!

STUDENT DEMOCRAT LEADER

What's the matter Tom, you never seen a real one before?

STUDENT REPUBLICAN LEADER

See! That's the problem! You think indecency is a laughing matter!



Kyle and Annette carefully approach. Kyle tries to lead navigate around them. Too late...

STUDENT DEMOCRAT LEADER

Excuse me, excuse me! Can I get your guys's opinion on something? Do you think the Naked Lady should be covered up?

ANNETTE

No! I think she's beautiful!

Annette walks right into the midst of them.

STUDENT DEMOCRAT LEADER

Hi! I'm the President of the Student Democrats-

STUDENT REPUBLICAN LEADER

Don't listen to them. Hi! I'm the President of Young Repub-

STUDENT DEMOCRAT LEADER

Give it a rest! She doesn't want to talk to you! Talk to her friend.

He points at the lingering Kyle.

STUDENT REPUBLICAN LEADER

We'll let them decide for themselves! You! Come on over, what's your name?

Kyle ambles over.

KYLE

My name's Kyle.

STUDENT REPUBLICAN LEADER

Kyle! So nice to meet you!

STUDENT DEMOCRAT LEADER

Kyle! Wouldn't you agree in saying this woman is beautiful!

KYLE

Well, I think-

STUDENT REPUBLICAN LEADER

That's a loaded question! You're leading him on!

STUDENT DEMOCRAT LEADER

What are you a lawyer now? Those are *her* words!

ANNETTE

I think she's just fine being naked. What do you think Kyle?

Her voice cuts through the noise.

KYLE

Well, I think it wouldn't hurt to cover up a little. We'd get the same idea.

A beat of quiet- then an eruption.

STUDENT REPUBLICAN LEADER

Haha! Fine. Alright, you get her, we'll take Kyle.

STUDENT DEMOCRAT LEADER

Wow a compromise, this is new. Deal. Hi, miss, are you interested in joining the Student Society of-

A much SMALLER GROUP of people rapidly roll up. A short, FEISTY GIRL shouts...

FEISTY GIRL

It should be a cardinal! A female, naked Cardinal!

This sends everyone into an uproar. Kyle spots a similar SCARF GIRL exiting the library through the madness, he pulls Annette away.

ANNETTE

Hey! Come on, we should get involved!

Kyle points at the scarf.

ANNETTE

Scaaaaaarf!

SCENE 4 - BETWEEN BRACKEN AND UNIVERSITY THEATER

Kyle jogs to catch up with the scarf wearing individual, Annette trailing a bit.

KYLE

Excuse me! Excuse me!

She turns.

KYLE

Hi. I'm sorry, I just noticed that you have a similar scarf as this one, and-

He holds up the scarf- the girl's eyes bug out. She holds her hands up.

SCARF GIRL

Where did you get that?!

ANNETTE

Someone just dropped it, we were just going to return it, but, Kyle here saw you and-

SCARF GIRL

I don't know anything about that scarf!

She runs straight towards University Theater.

SCARF GIRL

Don't follow me!

Annette and Kyle share a look.

ANNETTE

It doesn't look that bad on you.

Kyle scoffs. They walk down the steps.

KYLE

Well, based on your opinion of the Naked Lady in there, it'd probably look better *off* me. Would you like me to take anything else off?

ANNETTE

Don't be crude.

KYLE

Well, now what? We still have this, apparently, terrifying scarf.

ANNETTE

I think you owe me an apology. That was rude. I'm allowed to have my own opinions. And if you don't like--

Running footsteps. A shout. A MORMON.

MORMON

Hey guys! Guys, do you have a second? Guys! One second!

Kyle pulls at Annette again.

KYLE

Come on, we don't want to talk to this guy.

MORMON

Guys! One second!

Annette stays put. Kyle breaks away- a chance to leave. He hesitates, looking back at Annette. The Mormon catches up.

MORMON

Thank you so much. Hi, my name's Arthur and I'm a Member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Later Day Saints. Sir, do you have a moment?

Kyle looks at a smiling Annette.

KYLE

We're headed this way, but if you want to walk and talk, we'll give you a listen.

Arthur takes a deep breath as Rian leads off.

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Ok. What do you guys know about the Church of Jesus Christ of the Later Day Saints?

ANNETTE

Aren't you a Mormon?

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Well, yes, but technically-

ANNETTE

So why do you have to use that big long name?

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Well, you see, if you trace our lineage-

ANNETTE

I just feel like it would be much easier to start your conversation- if you say, "Hi, my name's Arthur and I'm a Mormon."

KYLE

Well Annette, let's not forget, he's allowed to have his own opinion on the matter.

ARTHUR THE MORMON

I agree, but we're taught that-

A PAMPHLETEER tries to hand Annette and Kyle a business card.

PAMPHLETEER

Join the Four Square Club! We meet-

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Get away! Get away from them! They're my catch! Shut up! Get away!

The Pamphleteer hisses, cursing after them. Kyle looks back, a scarf wearing individual walks up to her, happily obliging her solicitation.

ANNETTE

Maybe you should get a business card or something? It's much quicker, plus I can read it later.

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Yes, that's a good idea, but I was hoping-

KYLE

She does have a point. We're almost at the street here and you've hardly told us anything-

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Will you PLEASE join me in my Mormon Group!?

They look back. He has stopped a couple paces back, again by an invisible line.

ANNETTE

Well that's rather forward. I'm not sure how I feel about being converted to a new religion like that...

KYLE

Well I'm getting dinner. Sorry Arthur, I'm happy with my God.

ANNETTE

Arthur, you can walk with us to the Atrium if you want, I'd like to hear more.

ARTHUR THE MORMON

I can't. Just please, sign up here. I don't have a business card or anything, but if you write your name down-

ANNETTE

Wow. You're maybe the fourth person today to try and get us to sign up for a student organization.

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Well of course.

KYLE

Of course what?

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Everyone's trying to win.

He immediately clasps his hand to his mouth.

ANNETTE

What do you win?

KYLE

Is there a competition?

Arthur shakes his head, eyes darting.

ANNETTE

Do you need a handkerchief, do you feel sick? Here, use this.

She grabs the scarf from Kyle, unfurling it in the air.

ARTHUR THE MORMON

No, no, don't do that!

Too late. Two PASSERBYS (scarves tucked in) snap to attention.

KYLE

Wait, wait. Is it a competition for new members?

ARTHUR THE MORMON

Shhh..Shh.....!

Too late, the Passerbys run over, accosting Arthur, pulling him away.

ANNETTE

Hey! What are you doing!

PASSERBY 1

Don't worry, we'll take care of him. Good flag.

Passerby 2 has already talked down Arthur, who looks over at them, a dazed look in his eye. He waves, smiles, and walks away, silent.

KYLE

That was weird.

ANNETTE

Maybe he's bipolar?

Kyle rolls up the scarf, putting it in his pocket.

KYLE

Maybe let's not wave this around...

ANNETTE

Were you actually going to get dinner?

KYLE

Yeah, I guess. Did you eat already?

ANNETTE

Yes. I had chicken sandwich with a side salad and a cold, green tea.

KYLE

Ok. Well, I mean, I have dining plus, if you wanted to come with and grab a snack or anything...

Annette pauses, suddenly thinking.

ANNETTE

I would love to-

Another shout. This time from a suited man- VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

'Scuse me!

ANNETTE

Hi, can I help you?

Kyle looks to Annette, still waiting for her to finish her sentence. VP Cody Howard steps in.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

The name's Vice President Cody Howard, I think you guys voted for me.

ANNETTE

Actually, we're both Freshman, so I don't think so.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Well then, Cody Howard 2012, remember the name!

KYLE

Are you a republican or democrat?

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

This is college buddy- it switches like the wind, students are the fair weather fans of politics. Walk with me, I want to show you something.

SCENE 5 - DOWN MCKINLEY TO THE SCRAMBLE LIGHT

Annette and Kyle flank the VP.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

So, how's Ball State University treating you two?

ANNETTE

Just great! It seems like there's so much to get involved with.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Of course.

KYLE

Yeah, we've been hounded the last couple hours.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Well, you know, college is a great place to broaden your horizons.



A STUDENT flies past them, running away from two (scarved) OTHER STUDENTS. VP simply makes room as they run between them. No big.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

But you guys haven't joined anything yet, have you?

KYLE

I haven't, have you?

ANNETTE

Nope! But I've been tempted!

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Not even any clubs pertaining to your majors? Physics Club? Spanish Club?

ANNETTE

Do you have an Actuarial Science Club?

KYLE

We're both Undecided right now, so- we don't really have a home club.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Not a bad thing...

ANNETTE

What was the first club you joined when you were a freshman?

He stops walking for a second, sizing them up.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Things have changed a lot since I was a Freshman.

KYLE

When were you elected?

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Listen. I'm going to show you the heart of the campus. It sees the majority of the foot traffic for the university. Anyone coming in or out, clubs who work the Scramble Light get the most exposure. And exposure means more members, more members means more money, which means more-

Yet another shout- this time from JULIE. She jogs into the medium, ducking under trees.

JULIE

More votes! Don't listen to him- he only has one thing in mind, kiddos, and that's his job!

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

It's not a job, it's an extracurricular!

JULIE

And my noggin ain't a brain, it's a bullshit detector! And it's singing' your tune!

ANNETTE

Who's that?

JULIE

I'm Julie. Senior editor of the Daily News. You guys want a dose of truth, I'll be waiting for ya. I'll let Vice President Bullshit here say his piece.

She jogs back across, running out of sidewalk. They near the Scramble Light, a flurry of activity. VP Cody Howard stops.

KYLE

You a crooked politician?

Annette nods, on Kyle's side. VP sighs.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Not by choice... Guys, you have a lot to learn. And you *should* get involved. But take it from a man of many regrets- carve out your own path. You'll have the same view of something if you're always following it. And- know that those four corners are the ultimate prize.

ANNETTE

For the competition?

KYLE

For the most new members?

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

You saw what happened to the Mormon. I've said too much already. BUT, if I were to say a little more, and answer your question, I'd say "yes". Go take a look, it's a circus over there. After today, you might not see so much diversity for quite some time...

He thrusts his hands into his pockets, walking back the way they came.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Oh, and tell Julie I say hi. She's a bitch- but I still love her. And you can tell her that!

They watch him go- someone runs down the slope from Emens, locking arms with the VP, leading him away.

ANNETTE

You know, my parents said college would be a fun but confusing time. I might actually believe them.

KYLE

Yeah. Kinda glad I have a year to "adjust". Hate to say they were right though. You wanna check this out?

ANNETTE

Is this a date?

KYLE

What?

ANNETTE

Are you asking me out on a date?

KYLE

What? No. We're just walking there. I mean, I figured we could just... I mean, if you want to go, I can just like, put this on that bench there or something...

ANNETTE

Ok. Just checking.

Annette leads the way.

## SCENE 6 - THE SCRAMBLE LIGHT

All four corners are buzzing with people. Every student group and organization is talking to everybody, it's like the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

A couple GROUP LEADERS call to Kyle and Annette, held back by some invisible line. Suddenly a group of five or six SCARF WEARING INDIVIDUALS swarm around Kyle and Annette, graciously accepting the groups offers to become members.

KYLE

Didn't put up much of a fight, did they?

ANNETTE

Yeah... Come on.

They enter the fray. People ask them left and right to join their club- they fend them off.

HEADLESS VOICE 1

Care to join Ball State Chefs Anonymous?

ANNETTE

No thank you.

HEADLESS VOICE 2

Like pizza? Join the Papa John's Appreciation Association!

KYLE

I'm alright thanks.

HEADLESS VOICE 3

Fuck Papa John! Join Students for Garfield! Pledge allegiance to our most artistic alumni, Jim Davis!

KYLE

Jim Davis graduated from here?

Suddenly through the madness, one line cuts through- that of Actuarial Science.

ACTUARIAL SCIENCE LEADER

Do you love Actuarial Science? If so-

ANNETTE

I do!

She pushes through the crowd, Kyle quickly following. He notices the Actuarial Science Leader is wearing a tucked in scarf.

ACTUARIAL SCIENCE LEADER

Hi! Do you love Actuarial Science?

ANNETTE

Of course! That's all I've ever wanted to do!

ACTUARIAL SCIENCE LEADER

Well, you should join the club then!

ANNETTE

Of course! I actually had a couple questions first. For one,-

ACTUARIAL SCIENCE LEADER

Well, let's just get your name down here, and then I'm sure at our first meeting we can answer all of your questions.

ANNETTE

Well I don't just want to-

A scarf-wearing girl pushes past Annette.

ACTUARIAL SCIENCE LEADER

Excuse me, do you like Actuarial Science?

SCARF-WEARING GIRL

Why, I think I do? (to Annette) Do you?

ANNETTE

I do... But I was wondering-

SCARF-WEARING GIRL

Well, let's sign up. Together!

The girl goes ahead, writing all her information down.  
Kyle watches. He scans the crowd.

ANNETTE

Do you know anything about Actuarial Science?

SCARF-WEARING GIRL

Nope! But I'm sure I can learn! So can you! Come on, let's sign up!

ANNETTE

No thank you...

Annette grabs Kyle, tugging at his sleeve.

ANNETTE

Come on, let's get out of here.

ACTUARIAL SCIENCE LEADER

Wait! Think about all the science you'll be missing out on!

They exit the chaos.

#### SCENE 7 - ALONG MICKINLEY TO THE ATRIUM

Annette steams ahead of Kyle.

KYLE

Hey! Hold up! Annette!

He runs after her.

KYLE

Don't worry about it, now you know not to join that club!

ANNETTE

They shouldn't even call themselves a club! They probably don't know anything about p-values, gamma distributions, OR mortality and morbidity rates!

KYLE

I have no idea what you just said, but it's not that bad. You wanna know what club I was thinking about joining when I got here?

Annette stops for a second, back still turned.

KYLE

The Drama Club.

Passing students suddenly repel away from him like oil on water- some even running away.

Annette slowly turns around.

ANNETTE

The Drama Club?

A similar effect around her- students dash away.

KYLE

Yeah. I don't know, I've always wanted to try acting.

An actual Ball State tour pulls up behind Kyle- led by Julie.

JULIE

Alright, screw off. Tours over. I'm not your actual tour guide, but don't worry, at least you got the truth.

HIGH SCHOOLER

I'm never coming to college here!

JULIE

Yeah, you say that now! I'll see you in the Fall, bucko!

She looks at Kyle and Annette.

JULIE

Just in time- I love channel surfing into the middle of a lifetime movie- look at you two. You, Brad Pitt-in-training. You don't want to join the Drama Club. At least not right now, it'd be like taking an interest in matches when sitting on a powder keg. You, Heart-broken-by-Number-Science, things get better. Walk with me.

They fall in step. She walks in double time.

JULIE

Alright, fill me in. What do you know?

ANNETTE

Clubs are a joke.

JULIE

No, clubs are a suit in a deck of cards. Student organizations, on this day, at Ball State University- are a joke.

KYLE

There's some sort of competition for the most new members.

JULIE

Congratulations you have two eyeballs- a blind man could figure this feeding frenzy out.

Kyle pulls out the scarf.

KYLE

And no one likes this.

Julie shoves it back in Kyle's sweatshirt.

JULIE

Jesus Christ! You are an actor, you're fuckin' suicidal!

ANNETTE

So what's going on?

JULIE

You guys seem to be on the right track.

She pulls her phone out at the bus stop by the Atrium.

JULIE

Yeah, I'm ready. Come now, I got eyes on me.

ANNETTE

But why the Scramble Light?

JULIE

You notice how people suddenly just stop, like they're trapped in an invisible box? That's performance space, every group has their set space. Two and two together says that-

KYLE

The Scramble Light is the mother of all performance spaces.

The car pulls up. Julie gets in.

KYLE

But wait, who controls the performance spaces?

ANNETTE

Oh! And Vice President Cody Howards says you're a bitch, but he loves you anyway.

She pauses.

JULIE

That asshole. You know, we had something good, and then... I told him not to take their deal...

She jumps in the car, rolling down the window as the car pulls away.



JULIE

Follow the scarves! Just watch where you step. And tell Howard he can suck my...

The car is gone. The two look around, searching for scarves.

KYLE

We need a game plan.

JULIE

You still want something to eat?

KYLE

I could eat.

JULIE

Boys always can.

KYLE

I won't disagree.

They walk into the Atrium.

## SCENE 8 - THE ATRIUM

KYLE

I was, uh, actually thinking about trying Jamba Juice. We don't have one where I'm from, so...

ANNETTE

Oh! It's really good. Where are you from?

KYLE

Oh, just some tiny town in the middle of nowhere. Near Indy.

ANNETTE

You could just tell me the name.

KYLE

It's nothing. Really, you've never heard of it. Maybe ten people live there.

ANNETTE

I doubt that. Go ahead, try me- I was always good at geography.

KYLE

Wyattsville. Small town, small minds. One of those tiny towns where everyone knows everything about everyone else.

ANNETTE

Oh really? So everyone knew about your deepest, darkest secret?

Kyle falls silent.

KYLE

What are you talking about?

ANNETTE

Your secret acting ambitions, duh.

He smiles, laughing.

KYLE

Oh, you know, I was just trying to cheer you up, it's a pipe dream, I know that-

ANNETTE

Oh, well, if you were just trying to cheer me up, don't worry about it..

KYLE

Fine. When I was in 6th grade I really liked the 8th grade play. It was Singin' in the Rain.

ANNETTE

Did you audition in 8th grade?

KYLE

It was during baseball season. I couldn't.

ANNETTE

I see. Well, who knows, maybe you're a great actor!

They've reached the lounge area outside Jamba Juice. A  
PIANO MAN plinks at the out-of-tune piano.

PIANO MAN

Psst.

They look over at him.

PIANO MAN

Psssst. You wanna act?

KYLE

No, we were just talking about-

ANNETTE

Yeah! He would. Do you give lessons?

PIANO MAN

Shhhh! Come here. Sit down.

They all squish onto the piano bench as he plinks away.

PIANO MAN

There's a bag on the floor. Check it out.

Annette picks it up, placing it on her lap. Inside are scarves, lots of scarves. He pounds a discordant chord.

PIANO MAN

I got the good shit. Don't show anyone!

ANNETTE

What do these have to do with acting?

PIANO MAN

What are you, freshman?!

A beat of confirming silence.

PIANO MAN

Jesus- I feel terrible. It's like selling to kids.

KYLE

Answer her question.

PIANO MAN

Alright, easy, easy. Come on, you should be able to figure this shit out. You got the scarf, you're in the club.

ANNETTE

Which club?

PIANO MAN

Jesus, you're gonna make me say it out loud?

He looks around, pounds a couple loud chords, then--

PIANO MAN

The Drama Club.

KYLE

The Drama Club?

PIANO MAN

What are you, my fucking reverb? I have a pedal for that. Jesus. So, you buying or not?

ANNETTE

We've already got the hook-up, yo.

She flashes him their missing scarf. He pushes it away, starting to get nervous.

PIANO MAN

This better not be some sort of sting operation.

ANNETTE

You tell us what you know or I'm going to go tell the Drama Club you're playing Billy Joel over a treasure chest of their hijacked badges.

The Piano Man pounds a frustrated squeal out of the piano.

PIANO MAN

I should've known.... You looked so innocent.

ANNETTE

How did you get these scarves!

She bangs on his piano.

PIANO MAN

Look lady...

ANNETTE

How did you get them! I'm tired of games and half-clues, I want the truth!

She bangs again. Kyle has to cool her down.

PIANO MAN

Alright, alright!. All I heard was that the Drama Club was putting on this competition today, so, they would probably be getting more members, so they had some extra scarves shipped in. I took a little off the top, big deal, alright?

KYLE

The Drama Club put this competition on?

PIANO MAN

I ain't sayin' another word.

Annette pounds both fists on the piano. People start looking.

ANNETTE

Answer!

PIANO MAN

Look kids, I don't know. I sell scarves, I get Cardinal Cash, that's how it works. I don't ask questions beyond that. Everyone wants more members. They have a choke hold on performance spaces, so the chance to win the Scramble Light is huge! You guys are killing me, I'm outta here!

He scrambles his things together, Annette clawing at him as he hurries out.

KYLE

Easy there. I know we just met, but I never would've thought I'd be the good cop and *you'd* be the bad cop.

ANNETTE

Yeah, well, it's turned into an off day. I'm done with it, I'm going home. I'm not used to all this secrecy, all these half-truths. I'm too honest for this!

KYLE

Wait. Annette. Finish this with me. I didn't want anything to do with clubs, but now, the one club I may have possibly ever tried to get into turns out to be the source of all this...

She sighs.

KYLE

I opened up to you. See? Not everyone's keeping secrets. I need you.

ANNETTE

You swear? Because, by God, if you're in on any of this, I'll be forced to join the Therapy Club.

KYLE

Hand to heart.

ANNETTE

Is this the fun part of college? Or, does that come later?

KYLE

Not sure. We haven't even gone to our first college party yet.

ANNETTE

Speak for yourself...

KYLE

Really?!

ANNETTE

No... It was a mocktail party in my dorm's study lounge.

KYLE

Come on, I'll get you a Jamba Juice.

ANNETTE

We should put some... (whispers) alcohol in it.

They laugh.

KYLE

I wonder what that's like...

END OF ACT 1 - INTERMISSION

SCENE 8 - SECOND FLOOR ATRIUM TO LETTERMAN BUILDING

Kyle and Annette walk up the stairs from the Atrium to the Second Floor, walking towards the Letterman Building.

ANNETTE

So. It's your plan now. What's your Drama Club up to?

KYLE

I'm not sure. I just think it might be better to walk inside for a little, keep a low profile, just in case.

ANNETTE

Mmm... Good idea. So, first of all, why would the Drama Club choose to be a secret organization?

KYLE

Second of all, why did they decide to put on a competition for the Scramble Light? And third, what gives them the power to give away space like that?

ANNETTE

Yeah, I mean, you'd think that of any student organization, the Drama Club would be near the bottom of the list of, I don't know--

KYLE

Powerful, organizations.

The two round the corner, near the Art History lecture hall.

KYLE

And what is up with this scarf?

Just then Kimmo (the guy who dropped his scarf) fumbles out of the adjacent bathroom, with a BANG! Shuffling and hiding his face. The two parties freeze, making eye contact.

KIMMO

Scarf...

ANNETTE

Hey! You!

KYLE

We have your scarf!

Kimmo ambles his way towards them, moaning, very Gollum-esque.

KIMMO

You.... Took... Kimmo's scaaaarfffff....

ANNETTE

Well, technically you dropped it.

KIMMO

Give.... Me... My... SCAAARRRRFFF....

Kyle steps in front of Annette, backing her down the hallway towards Letterman.

KYLE

Hey, calm down, I think you owe us some explanation.

KIMMO

MYYYYY SCARRFFFF!!!

Kimmo's shuffle turns into a hop which turns into a run and a blood-curdling howl- Kyle and Annette take off.

KYLE

Run! Run, run, run!!!

KIMMO

My SCAAARRFFF! GIVE IT BAAAACCCKK TO KIMMMOOOOOOO!

Kyle and Annette run all the way past the TCOM office where a squad of HUMANS VS ZOMBIES (HvZ) come up the stairs.

ANNETTE

There's a zombie coming! Get ready!

This sends the group into fervor, cocking their Nerf guns. Annette and Kyle run past as Kimmo nears the HvZ group.

KIMMO

Get out of my waaaay!!!

He screeches in anger as he is pelted with Nerf darts. Kimmo recoils but muscles forwards. The HvZ blocks him, boo'ing.

HVZ LEADER

Hey man! You're out!

KIMMO

But.. They have, my... They have my scarf.

HVZ LEADER

Rules are Rules- go to the tagged zone!



With a whimper Kimmo leaves, scowling at Kyle and Annette. Annette gives Kyle a pleasantly surprising hug.

ANNETTE

We did it!

KYLE

Yeah! We did... Now we definitely need to know what's up with these scarves.

They walk into the Letterman Building, standing on the bridge overlooking the ground level. Below them is a Bake Sale. Two FRAT BROS are being confronted by a LACKEY and FRIGO (both wearing scarves).

FRIGO

Boys! You're not listening to me! I don't care how few cookies you baked or IF the money is, supposedly, for the World Wildlife Foundation- nothing gets sold that WE don't get a cut of!

ANNETTE

Who's that guy?

KYLE

I don't know, but he sounds dramatic...

FRAT BRO 1

Frigo! We needed the money by this weekend or we would've gotten kicked off campus!

FRIGO

(to Lackey)

Take a bite of one of those!

The Lackey does as he's told. He spits it out.

FRAT BRO 2

Frigo, we're sorry, we didn't have time, we had to go with store bought!

FRIGO

What did you just say to me?

FRAT BRO 2

...We went with store bought.

FRIGO

At least you have the decency of telling me the truth. But! Not only did you not put in a request for the Drama Club's Bake Sale sanctioned confections, but you also went around our backs and went with store bought?

FRAT BRO 1

Please don't do this- we promise, it won't happen again.

FRIGO

You're right. It won't. Understudy him.

FRAT BRO 1

Please, him not me!

FRAT BRO 2

No, no- understudy him!

Lackey steps forward, cracking his knuckles, taking deep breaths.

FRAT BRO 1

Frigo, please don't do this!

LACKEY

Frigo, please don't do this!

FRAT BRO 1

No, no, no, please, I promise it will never happen again!

LACKEY

No, no, no, please, I promise it will never happen again!

Frat Boy 2 tries to pull the Lackey away. Gusto pulls out a police hat, putting it on.

FRIGO

Alright there youngster, you're going to have to come with me.

Frat Boy 2 now looks at Gusto, acting as a Police Officer.

FRAT BRO 2

I'm sorry officer, it's just that, my friend over here...

He looks over, suddenly not able to figure out which of the two is his who.

LACKEY

Hey, come on bro, we gotta get back to the Frat House and drink a lot of beer! Yeah!

Lackey grabs Frat Bro 2, ushering him away.

FRIGO

Alright, buddy you're coming with me.

Frigo grabs a dazed and confused Frat Bro 1, leading him out towards the Bell Tower.

Kyle and Annette look at each other.

KYLE

What just happened?

ANNETTE

Something about an understudy? And then there was... A policeman, and two frat guys... And another dude.... And a guy named Frigo...

KYLE

And scarves.

ANNETTE

Follow the scarves...

KYLE

Both the Policeman and that Frigo guy, wherever he went, both had scarves. So they're both members of the Drama Club?

ANNETTE

Where did that Frigo guy go? It's like he just vanished- and then "poof" there was a policeman...

A beat. Both thinking.

KYLE

We totally should.

ANNETTE

Yeah, we should. Let's go.

The two head around the corner, taking the lobby stairs down to the Letterman Lobby. They playfully nudge each other on the way down.

ANNETTE

You know, I thought you were going to be a real wet tower when I met you earlier.

KYLE

Yeah, well, I thought you were going to be a real nut job when I met you earlier.

ANNETTE

So we're even.

KYLE

I still kind of think you're a nut job.

ANNETTE

I still can't believe you want to be an actor.

KYLE

What! Why not?

ANNETTE

No, no- I think it's great! I think it's funny how self-conscious you are about it. And you're just so... Indiana.

KYLE

What's wrong with Indiana?

ANNETTE

There's nothing wrong with Indiana. You're just so... American.

KYLE

...What's wrong with America?

ANNETTE

Nothing! I just... you remind me of corn fields and earned sweat and really deep, belly laughter.

Kyle shakes his head. How do you respond to that?

KYLE

I can't believe how *not* self-conscious you are about wanting to be an actuarial accountant-whatever that is.

They arrive at the bottom of the staircase, in the Letterman lobby, heading out towards the Bell Tower. A COMMUTER STUDENT digs around the now vacant bake sale table.

KYLE

Hey, come on! You should pay for that.

The Commuter Student jumps, freezing like a deer in the headlights. He begins shaking, something pent up coming loose. Watch out, it's a monologue.

COMMUTER STUDENT

Do you know what it's like to commute to school! You're nobody. You sit in a car, driving here day in and day out. You don't make friends in class because no wants to be in class, let alone talk to a stranger. Everyone hates to have group projects with you. You still have parents nagging you back home, constantly reminding you of all the money you're saving. You can't really shake your old friends who also commute. Those same old friends that want to smoke pot and talk about our sad attempt at a High School Senior prank every, single night in the same cul-de-sac you first learned how to ride a bike in?

Slowly, other rag tag COMMUTERS drift in from around, mumbling, rallied by the indignant cries.

COMMUTER STUDENT

You can't really join a student group. You can't really justify getting home at one in the morning because the Linguistics Club can only get meeting space at 8 o'clock on a Thursday night! And so you scrounge around, avoiding that *unnamed* club that enforces all its little rules, trying your best to not get tangled in its sticky theatrical web. So you remain a nobody- because it's easier that way. And suddenly, you realize- I have gone nowhere. I have run back and forth on the same piece of string for the last twenty-one years of my life! And you hate it! You HATE yourself! But you're saving ALL THAT MONEY! AND YOU'RE TELLING ME NOT TO GRAB ONE FREE COOKIE!

Kyle and Annette are frozen.

KYLE

I sincerely apologize. Have as many as you want.

They sprint out the front doors into the sunlight, as the Commuter Students rush the table.

## SCENE 9 - THE BELL TOWER

They slow down, coming to stop by McKinley.

ANNETTE

I am so glad I'm from out-of-state.

KYLE

Did that look like corn fields and sound like deep, belly laughter? Come on, before they change their minds and come after us.

They cross McKinley to the Bell Tower, walking under it. A figure runs by one of the openings. They look. It runs by again- circling them.

KIMMO

Scaaarrrrrffff.

KYLE

Uh oh. We got company.

KIMMO

Give Kimmo the scaaaarf...

ANNETTE

You can have the scarf back if you answer some questions.

Kimmo hops into view.

KIMMO

What do you stupids want to know?

KYLE

What's the point of the scarf?

KIMMO

Dumb dumby dumb-dumbs...

He begins circling again.

ANNETTE

We know it's a sign of being a Drama Club member. But does it do anything else?

KIMMO

Give the scarf to Kimmo, and me will show you's...

KYLE

Fat chance. You're going to take it and run right back to the Drama Club.

He darts through, pausing to leer at them.

KIMMO

I CAN'T! Now that you stupid's have touched it and shown it to everyone on campus... They know! They've thrown me out!

ANNETTE

Oh. Sorry about that!

KYLE

So why do you need it?

KIMMO

Gives it to me- I will help solve your little mystery.

Kyle gives Annette a look, she shrugs "sure". Kyle holds it out- Kimmo darting through, snatching it. He puts it on with a smile, spinning around.

KIMMO

Now you see Kimmo...

He dashes out of sight, going to a different entrance. A beat- he saunters into view now, acting like David Letterman.

KIMMO

Weeeelllll hey! Welcome to the Late Show with David Letterman! We have a great show for you tonight! We've got Stupid One and Stupid Two from Ball State University!

KYLE

Mr. Letterman! I love your show!

ANNETTE

Wow! It's an honor. I'm more of a Conan fan myself, but...

Kimmo pulls the scarf off. Kyle and Annette jump back.

KYLE

Kimmo...?

KIMMO

Yous stupid heads. It's called acting. We's was so powerful, because we could be anybody! We's be in character and you's dumb dumbs would never know! I's was on assignment with the fraternity when I lost my scarf- had just been elected Treasurer too!

KYLE

Wait.

ANNETTE

They're plants!

KYLE

They're moles!

KIMMO

Dumb dumbs finally get it! Kimmo's leaving, good luck- Pruis is da beginning of da ends.

Kimmo quickly scuttles away.

KYLE

Wait! What do you mean Pruis?

ANNETTE

That's why when I tried to get into the Actuarial Science club... She had a scarf on-

KYLE

And it was easier to just accept another scarf-

ANNETTE

They were both in on it-

KYLE

In the Drama Club.

A moment of realization.

ANNETTE

So what's going on at Pruis?

A beat.

KYLE

Yup. Let's go.



## SCENE 10 - BELL TOWER FIELDS

Kyle and Annette set off at a brisk pace bee-lining towards  
Pruis Hall via Frog Baby.

ANNETTE

So, I have to ask, does that change your opinion on acting at all?

KYLE

I can't tell if I'm more enticed or fearful now.

ANNETTE

The possibilities are endless.

KYLE

I really hope we walk into Pruis and it's just a giant rouse to get everyone to watch a  
performance of Oklahoma or something.

ANNETTE

Oh come on, that would be too...

She trails off as a contingent of foam-sword wielding  
RED DAGORHIR PLAYERS run across the field in  
front of them, forming a line.

ANNETTE

Easy?

They spin around, a BLUE DAGORHIR TEAM trapping  
them in the middle.

BLUE TEAM LEADER

Hast thou no honor!?

RED TEAM LEADER

Hast THOU no honor?!

BLUE TEAM LEADER

Thine bretheren have stolen our newest members for the last fortnight!

RED TEAM LEADER

Tis but choice my good animal- thou best surrender before thy measly army is waylaid on  
our land.

ANNETTE

Uhhh, guys?

The two sides completely ignore her.

BLUE TEAM LEADER

Your land! Thou joketh.

RED TEAM LEADER

Surely, thou doth not think this is your land?

BLUE TEAM LEADER

Sound the horns of battle boys, them be fightin' words!

The Blue Team charges. The Red Team charges. Kyle and Annette brace for impact. The two teams fight around Kyle and Annette, who weave their way out, spit back out at Frog Baby.

#### SCENE 11 - FROG BABY (AGAIN)

Annette is doubled over.

KYLE

Annette are you alright!

ANNETTE

Just a mild friction burn. I'll be alright.

Kyle kneels beside her, genuinely concerned. Quietly, Frigo slips around from behind Frog Baby.

FRIGO

Good evening, my snooping little Freshman.

Kyle leaps up, again shielding Annette, who struggles to her feet- Kyle helps her.

FRIGO

Please, the standing ovation comes after the performance. Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Frigo and I'm the president of the Drama Club, of which I'm sure you've heard plenty about by now. A little buzzing bee told me you might be headed to Pruis- possibly even with delusions of throwing a kink in tonight's entertainment. And frankly, I can't have that.

Both Lackey and a smiling Kimmo step out from behind Frog Baby.

FRIGO

It's too bad, you guys have learned so much in one day. I almost wish I would've had the education you've gotten- it could've taken over this University in half the time. But don't worry, you won't have to worry about that anymore. Being understudied is like being on cruise control- it'll make everything easier.

ANNETTE

Wait- can I choose my... character?

FRIGO

Sorry, I've already written the script. Now if you'll excuse me, I must be off. The next scene awaits.

Frigo exits, Kimmo hopping along with him.

LACKEY

Alright. Now, just relax, and it will be over in a--

JULIE

Excuse me!

The Lackey turns around. Julie and Vice President Cody Howard are jogging over.

JULIE

Did you park over in the visitor lot?

LACKEY

What are you doing here?

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

It's ok, she's with me.

LACKEY

You know we don't trust her.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

Don't worry, she's dragged my name through the papers as well.

LACKEY

Fine. Yeah... I paid the meter though.

Silver Prius?  
JULIE

Yeah... Why?  
LACKEY

JULIE  
Sorry, don't mean to interrupt. You got Parking Services hovering around your car like flies on shit.

The Lackey is torn, pointing at Kyle and Annette to stay where they are.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD  
I tried to give them a waiver, but I've already used a waiver for your car once before.

JULIE  
You know the bastards- they're unforgiving.

LACKEY  
Ok. Ok, ok! Can you watch these guys for me real quick? Just have them stay right here?

JULIE  
Yeah, sure.

LACKEY  
Remember who put you, and *keeps* you in office Howard!

VP Cody Howard forces a grin.

VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD  
Wouldn't dream of doing anything.

LACKEY  
Ok. Just, tell them not to move. (to them) Don't move! I'll be right back.

Kyle and Annette nod. Lackey runs off, cursing Parking Services.

JULIE  
Alright kiddos, you owe us one. You did a good job following the scarves- sorry for the ambiguity, I just didn't want to get you too involved if you chose not to. Looks like you did. Welcome to the good side. I gotta interview this piece of work. No one knows what's going down in Pruis, but it's time to take sides-

## VICE PRESIDENT CODY HOWARD

And I'm done being their scapegoat. Time to fight fire with fire.

A BREATHLESS MESSENGER runs up to her- handing her a note, then running right back where he came from.

## JULIE

Hell no. That's censorship, he can't do that. (to Kyle/Annette) Alright, we gotta go- buckle up kiddos, it's going to be a bumpy four years!

They take off, phone out. The two share yet another breathless moment.

## ANNETTE

So. Now what? We're just doomed for the next four years?

## KYLE

Yeah, I didn't sign up for this.

Out from the same tree area walks out the Guitarist. He sits down by the fountain and starts playing a SAD SONG. He sings.

Musical Number: "Just Two Tadpoles"

- the number starts off slow, a lament about just being two tadpoles in a pond, not being able to change anything. It builds though, the guitarist moving with Kyle and Annette as they walk towards Prais, backup singers, dancers, and live instruments and band filter out into a parade of sorts.

- They sing about overcoming their preconceptions about college, learning to change.

- By the end of the number they are standing arm-in-arm outside Prais, confidence to go in and stop the Drama Club.

## SCENE 12 - PRAIS HALL

The two quickly run through the lobby and up the ramp. At the ramp they meet a line of people waiting to get in. Scarves are scattered throughout.

ANNETTE

We don't have a scarf...

KYLE

That's fine. We joined the Actuarial Science club.

They see the entry, a BOUNCER guarding. He asks questions to each member, confirming they know something about the club they are joining.

BOUNCER

What's the final situation in a Chess Match?

POTENTIAL CHESS CLUB MEMBER

Well! That depends, it could either be Checkmate or a Stalemate. In some countries they call it a Draw, in others, rules dictate-

BOUNCER

Ok, go ahead.

Kyle and Annette reach the front.

BOUNCER

What club have you joined?

ANNETTE

Actuarial Science. Both of us.

BOUNCER

Oh... You're the first.

He looks at his clipboard.

BOUNCER

Uhhh... What exactly *IS* Actuarial Science?

ANNETTE

So glad you asked! Actuarial Science mostly works with statistics and assigning the appropriate risk factor-

BOUNCER

Ok, ok, you're good. Go ahead.